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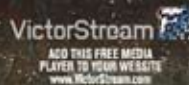
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# HEAVEN'S METAL

## VINTAGE COVER

I enjoy chatting and catching up with my old friend, David Bach. Knowing that he's good with words, I asked him if he'd like to write a "Where Are They Now?" type piece on his old band, Guardian. He was happy to oblige, and it was only perfect timing, because they've resurrected the band in their own style to their own self-imposed limitations and are documenting it all on their House of Guardian homepage [houseofguardian.com].

We have some cool stuff planned for the future, so keep reading Heaven's Metal fanzine ... and subscribe to HM Magazine, too. You won't get the whole picture with just one of these publications. They both complement each other and they're both way into metal.

Doug Van Pelt



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### Heaven's Metal Editorial Team:

Chris Beck, Bob Beeman, Chris Gatto, Loyd Harp, Ed Hellig, Johannes Jonsson, Mike Larson, Jeff McCormack, Steve Rowe, Jonathan Swank, Doug Van Pelt, Todd Walker

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Advertising/Editorial Info: [dvanpelt@hmmag.com](mailto:dvanpelt@hmmag.com)

512.989.7309 | 1660 CR 424, Taylor TX 76574

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## LOCKED AWAY...

In the mid to late 80's the thrash scene was thriving in both the secular market and in the Christian market. Bands like Vengeance Rising, Deliverance, Sacrament and Believer were leading the pack in the Christian thrash circuit. In 1989 somewhere in Pennsylvania a demo tape would emerge that would make a long lasting impression on the Christian Thrash scene. That demo was called... *Totally Possessed*. The band... THRESHER!!!!

The band would release and distribute only 500 copies of that first demo tape, selling it at their shows and through print magazines like *Heaven's Metal*. That demo would catch the eye of many people in the scene and in the industry. This tape, if you can find one today, goes for quite a few bucks on sites like eBay! After the success of the demo the band would next record a couple of tracks that would be included on two much-sought-after compilations for REX Records. This would garner even more attention on this young and thriving band. Next, with label interest in both the Christian and Secular markets, they would go in and record what would be their next and ultimately their final, full length release entitled *Here I Am*. *Here I Am* was to be their breakthrough album, and was recorded live in the studio with very few overdubs at Lifeline Studios in Pennsylvania. But the band would begin to deteriorate as they battled to try and balance both music and their personal lives. The album would ultimately never be released and has been locked away for close to 20 years, until now!!! After all these years, Roxx Records, in conjunction with Thresher, is set to release this long lost treasure upon the world in a Limited Edition CD format. Eight never before released tracks, these tracks, while locked away for years, have stood the test of time and are still relevant and stand up with the best of them in today's Thrash scene.

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# METAL TRACKS

*Hard-news-for-metal-heads*



By LOYD HARP

Be looking for more Kekal coverage from *Heaven's Metal* as the recent changes in the band develop more. In the meantime, feast:

**I've been following Kekal since I first heard *Embrace the Dead* over 10 years ago. The band has gone through immense evolutions in sound. Can you tell us a little bit about that?**

That's a long long story. To make it short, let me put it this way: We are as honest in 1999 as we are in 2009. Kekal is our own parallel universe. I mean, our music is basically a reflection of our own lives. As we see music as a whole, it is very natural to have us switching styles, genre-wise. It's like changing clothes, like you can wear a tuxedo suit today and t-shirt and short-pants yesterday. You see that we do more electronic than organic lately, because we don't have time to work on music the organic and traditional way, like jamming together and having regular rehearsals. But if you take out and strip all the electronic elements of our current albums and also the organic elements of our older albums, all you have is the core of Kekal and you will see they are all the same.

**Kekal were one of the earliest examples of Christian black metal. How did a Christian black metal band form (in all places . . . ) Indonesia?**

Well, we never feel that Kekal was Christian black metal. We don't believe in that whole "Christian metal" term. To us, Christian black

metal and Christian metal don't exist and I am not joking. There are only 2 kinds of music: honest music and fake music. And we just make music at the most honest level possible. Back in 1995 to 2000, Indonesia was in the political turmoil, and there were unrest and civil wars and such (bleep) happening. There were intense conflicts between Muslims and Christians up to the point that they killed each other and thousands died just because of that. And, at the same time, black metal was about to come out in Indonesia. Some local bands did use all the anti-Christian image of black metal, only to justify their dislike to Christianity as a religion, and we felt it would create another bad thing to the average local kids – as in the political level there were unrest and tense things going on and we really, really hate to see music being used as a tool of hatred spread among young kids. So, we came out with the music that is 180 degrees different and we put out quality music with the goal to be the best metal band in Indonesia, but without jumping on the same pathetic wave, and also to make people think. The political situation in Indonesia started to change after the former president/dictator was taken out of power in 1998, and there was a period of transition from 1999 up to 2003 and those religious tensions were somewhat reduced.

## News bullets

If you have not heard, the rumors are that a new **Sacred Warrior** CD is in the works. Visit [myspace.com/sacred-warrior777](http://myspace.com/sacred-warrior777) and encourage the band. Our condolences go out to the family and friends of keyboardist **Rick Macias**, who went to be with the Lord in February.

**Hemotheory** has been busy working on tracks for their brand new CD, which promises to be a very different musical style than previously releases, leaving behind much of the alternative rock mix for a much more guitar driven sound. Webisodes featuring behind the scenes song writing and live samples can be found now on their site at [hemotheory.com](http://hemotheory.com).

Fans who remember the shredding guitars and straight from the Bible lyrics of **Apostle** may be excited to know **Matt Harding** is back with a new band, **The Jacob's Ladder**. Check it out at [myspace.com/thejacobsadder3](http://myspace.com/thejacobsadder3).

2009 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of legendary punk band **The Crucified**. Set for release in June is a boxset featuring the never-before-released KGB demo, a remix of *The Pillars of Humanity* album and almost 2-hours of exclusive video footage. See [thecrucified.net/Cru](http://thecrucified.net/Cru)

**Liberty N' Justice** is proud to announce they have begun recording their 9th studio album and 5th "all-star" project, *The Cigar Chronicles*. It will once again feature a plethora of "known" singers on the albums 14 tracks. More info at [myspace.com/libertynjustice2](http://myspace.com/libertynjustice2).

**Bombworks Records** announces the signing of **Divulgence**. Hailing from Greenville, SC, Divulgence roars onto the scene with a base of thrash spiced up with black metal and an occasional death metal leaning to bring a fresh sound to the extreme metal world. Check them out at [myspace.com/divulgencesc](http://myspace.com/divulgencesc).

**Bombworks Records** is also excited to announce the signing of recently reformed **Seventh Angel**. The line up of the newly reformed Seventh Angel consists of original members **Ian Arkley** on vocals / guitars, **Simon Bibby** on vocals / guitars, **Andrew "Tank" Thompson** on drums, and **Mark Broomhead** of **Detritus** fame on bass / vocals. Already with festival showings in The Netherlands and Norway over the past year, the band is ready to unleash a new set of crushing tunes on a new generation, showcasing the same classic thrash sound with a larger death and doom influence. Seventh Angel will be entering the studio in late March to record their first studio album since the release of *Lament for the Weary* and will be holding true to their doom-infused thrash metal sound. The title of the new full length will be *The Dust of Years* and will be released summer of 2009 as a deluxe digipak.

Bombworks also announced the signing of **Monolith**. Hailing from Ontario, Canada, Monolith plays a unique brand of orchestrally driven extreme metal that blends crushing metal riffs and brutal vocals with killer melodies, soaring clean vocals, and a heavy dose of synths and orchestral instrumentation. Check out some demo tracks at [myspace.com/monolith](http://myspace.com/monolith).

*[cont'd on next page]*



## METAL BY OBEDIENCE

# Faith Factor



By **NORMAN KIERSZNOWSKI**  
 Edited By **JONATHAN SWANK**

Faith Factor was formed in 2005. Norm "Ski" Kiersznowski had been called to use his talent for God's purpose. Ski set out to form a Christian power metal band and it was to be called Faith Factor. The name "Faith Factor" implies: "What is your faith? What do you believe in and how far along in that faith are you?"

From its inception, God has been the very focal point of this brand new ministry – a ministry conceived by the will of God for His purpose. Ski brought together the initial line-up: Jim Alesi (guitar) – who later left to spend more time with his family; Blaine Booth (guitar); Chris Matisueski (guitar/keyboards); Joe Manghan (bass); and Dan Jefferson (drums). In the winter of 2006, the band signed with Metallic Archangel Records and went into the studio to record a three song EP entitled *070/7/07*. The EP served as a calling card and was shopped around for a larger recording contract all over the world. The acclaimed EP sold 700 copies in 7 months in Europe – especially in the underground German metal scene – and landed them a coveted spot at the Keep It True Festival. It also drew the attention of Retroactive Records, with whom they subsequently signed a new record deal. In the late fall of 2008, they went back into the studio to start work on their first full-length album entitled *Against A Darkened Sky* (see review *Heaven's Metal* #78), which was released worldwide November 11th. Today the new album is sold internationally through Brutal Plant Distribution. The band is very thankful for the opportunity the Lord has entrusted them with, and they are ready to go anywhere He calls them to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Relates Ski, "The secular metal world knows who we are and what we are about; they have accepted us with open arms. We talk with as many fans as we can to share our life's experience walking with our Savior and how He has changed our lives. People are always interested and eager to listen and we plant as many seeds of the Great Commission as we can. The band is currently putting together our *All Divine in '09* tour. Metal blessings to all this year – 'Faith is not by seeing, but every word that comes from the mouth of God.' Read your Bible and be blessed." [faithfactorband.com]

Narnia are due to release a new album in July, with new vocalist **German Pascual**. Narnia reports that the recording of *Course of a generation* is almost complete and they're now putting the final magic touches on it, before final mix and mastering. The result is truly explosive and it's the most unique album they have ever done – by far. "We have a new and unique blend of dark and aggressive riffing along with melodies that we believe are the strongest in our history." The new album will be released in Europe by Massacre Records on July 24th 2009. Keep up to date with them at [myspace.com/narniaofficial](http://myspace.com/narniaofficial).

There is word of a 2009 new album by long time Swedish rockers **Jerusalem**. Keep an eye on [jerusalem.se](http://jerusalem.se) for more details.

Melodic Metal band **Harmony** is currently working with a music video for the track "Prevail", the opening track from their latest album "*Chapter II: Aftermath*." The band has also released a new website at [harmonymetal.net](http://harmonymetal.net)

**HERO** is now signed to (Retroactive Records, USA), and the new forthcoming record is titled *Immortal*, scheduled to release June (2009). **Torbjorn Weinesjo** (Veni Domine) mixed the album, and it was mastered by **Daniel Stragefors**. HERO means Heavy Songs that appeals to more than just "Metal Heads." The recipe for HERO is: heavy groove-ridden guitars, thundering bass, bombastic drums, and melodic baritone vocals and strong melodies. Expect a strong classic metal influence combined with the dark modern vibe of bands like Veni Domine, HIM, and mid-period Deliverance! [[myspace.com/herosweden](http://myspace.com/herosweden)]



U.S. power metalers **Cage** will be touring in Europe May '09 in support of their new epic CD titled *Science Of Annihilation*, to be released May 22nd through Music Buy Mail. This from the tours promoter, "Lugga Music Productions in cooperation with SwordBrothers Productions are proud to present one of the best power metal bands live at 15 locations around Europe. Those who are familiar with Cage's live shows know that this is an event no true metal fan should miss. Cage's live shows are an energetic and powerful trip through their recording history, covering 4 full-length albums by now. With their fifth album *Science Of Annihilation* in their bags they will once again conquer Europe and present what many critics call 'pure millennium metal,' 'classic metal for the new age' or 'modern day power metal.'" [cageheavymetal.com]

Soundmass is pleased to announce the signing of **Roots of Tragedy**. Hailing from Nordland, Norway, Roots of Tragedy has remained silent since their *Awakening Beyond* demo in 2006. However, 2009 will see them unleash their first full-length recording. Inspired by the likes of Cradle of Filth, Dimmu Borgir, **Antestor** and **Extol**, expect a mix of symphonic black metal and dark funeral doom, with elements of death and progressive metal. For some embryonic samples, check out [myspace.com/rootsoftragedy](http://myspace.com/rootsoftragedy).

Issue 79 misprint: In the Various Artists – *4-way Noise Explosion* review the second band listed should be **Rehumanize**, not Dehumanize. Also, the first section of the Rehumanize review should read as follows: "Features Brock of Eternal Mystery and Phil of Encryptor, but doesn't sound like either of those bands." For further clarification, **Eternal Mystery** is featured on *4-Way Noise Explosion*, but the review we printed also commented on their separate full-length release, titled *Ultimate Death Sentence*.



# METAL TRACKS

Page eight



## AN ENCOURAGING WORD

Great issue! I especially liked Steve Rowe's column. GBU, Dad.

—Larry Van Pelt, via internet

Ed — Thanks, Dad!

## I SMELL PAPER

Out of all the emails you receive, this is probably different. Did you change printing on the new *Heaven's Metal* mag (Driver on the cover)? The paper looked brighter, the print looked clearer and the toner smelled different. I work for a printing company, that's why I ask. :)

—Robert (Death is Gain), via internet

Ed — I remember you in high school — every time they passed out a test, you sniffed it!

## WHAT GARY SAYS

Time for a "What So and So Sez" for Gary Lenaire. If you have done one already, what issue was it in? 2050 is the name of the band and features Erik M. and Victor M. Of course, most people know about his book he released in 2006. We really need to start praying for the musicians in Christian music.

Tom Blaszczyk, via internet

Ed — I agree about the prayer suggestion. This is a good article idea. I'll look into it.

## TOTALLY MISGUIDED

As a long-time subscriber to *Heaven's Metal* magazine, it is with sadness that I must ask for the removal of Pastor Bob from the pages of *Heaven's Metal*. Pastor Bob is an apostate due to his now pro-homosexual support. Just letting my opinion be known. Thanks,

—Steve Jim, via internet

*He is not pro-homosexual. I think you have misunderstood what he said. An angry person has twisted his words and made him sound like he supports sin. If I thought one of my writers — especially a columnist — supported sin, I would most likely fire him so fast you'd never know.*

## WAS THAT A TOURNIQUET QUOTE?

Tourniquet is still my favorite band of all times. Any news on what they're up to now? It's been about four years since their last album, not counting the re-issues. They are still doing some tours, but are they ever going to record again? Thanks.

—Daniel Skuya, via internet

Ed — I forwarded your letter to drummer Ted Kirkpatrick, but have not heard back yet. The band has just re-issued *Crawl To China*, as you may know, and is playing a show soon in Germany.

## [nothin' but] News bullets

In **Scott Stapp** news, it's been a low-key start to the year, but Scott's been taking the time to talk about two major influences on his life: God and the US troops. Scott spoke about his ever-changing relationship with God to the congregation of Spanish River Church in Boca Raton, FL. Hear this and much more at [passionbreedsfollowers.com](http://passionbreedsfollowers.com)

The brutal progressive/melodic death metalers **Krig** have independently released their full length *Target: Human, Mission: Destroy* in March. With an album that is nothing shy of a brutal campaign against the world, politics, hypocrisy, and downright wicked junk, Krig drops the death bomb in a campaign that will kick 2009 off to a blistering mouthful of truth. Visit [myspace.com/krigdeathmetal](http://myspace.com/krigdeathmetal).

**Stryper** vocalist Michael Sweet's wife Kyle Rae Sweet has passed on and is now at peace with her Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ. Please continue to pray for the Sweet family. We ask that if you wish to express your sympathies within an e-mail that you send them to the following e-mail address: [thesweetfamily@michaelsweet.com](mailto:thesweetfamily@michaelsweet.com). Kyle was diagnosed with cancer in February 2007. She passed away at 8:30 p.m. ET on Thursday, March 5, 2009.

After a six year hiatus in Australia **X-Sinner** guitarist and founding member **Greg Bishop** returns to the U.S. to reside permanently. Previously only being able to perform with the group a couple times a year when visiting America, this move will now allow Greg to perform with the band constantly. "Having Greg back in the fold is very X-citing!" says lead vocalist Rex Scott with a smile. "It frees me up considerably on stage not having to play guitar AND sing. Greg's live stunt double Thom Schultman who filled the lead guitar role in Greg's absence will slide into the rhythm guitar slot now occupied by Rex. X-Sinner's new album *World Covered In Blood* went live March 31st in Best Buy and FYE retail outlets and the band needs all of the fans to help get the album into their local stores by calling or going in and requesting they get it! This action will help speed up the process of getting *World Covered In Blood* everywhere.

Legendary recording artist **John Schlitt** (Petra) will be joining forces with Swedish soul/R&B group **Adahl** for a special European tour this summer. Adahl is comprised of brothers Frank and Simon Adahl, both formerly of award-winning Swedish contemporary Christian music group **Edin/Adahl**. This summer's tour marks a special reunion for Schlitt and Adahl, who toured together in the early 1990s. Backed by a full band, the artists will introduce European fans to their new solo projects and take a nostalgic look back at their earlier hits. [[johnschlitt.com](http://johnschlitt.com)]

**Bride** is very busy these days with a fan-financed CD [details at [bridepub.com](http://bridepub.com)]. **Troy** and **Dale Thompson** have been writing songs for the past few months together. This upcoming project may very well be Bride's last endeavor. Back in 1985 when Bride first was formed, Dale and Troy never imagined that the band would still be viable after over twenty years of music making. This 2009 project is "no-holds-barred when it comes to creativity and music making." This labor of love should take the listener beyond any imaginative work Bride has ever done in the past and challenge the audio senses.

For more news, visit [hmmag.com/heavensmetal](http://hmmag.com/heavensmetal)



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# IMPELLITTERI

What Chris Impellitteri Says...

BY JEFF MCCORMACK

**CHRIS IMPELLITTERI IS A MASTER GUITAR SHREDDER WHO HAS BEEN TEARING IT UP SINCE THE LATE 1980'S, WHEN HIS FIRST 4-SONG EP WAS RELEASED. HE IS USUALLY MOST NOTED FOR HIS INCREDIBLE PLAYING SPEED, AND 2009 SEES THE RELEASE OF HIS ELEVENTH RELEASE, *WICKED MAIDEN*, WHICH SEES THE RETURN OF VOCALIST EXTRAORDINAIRE ROB ROCK AFTER AN EIGHT YEAR ABSENCE. FROM WHAT I HAVE HEARD SO FAR, IT IS ONE OF THE HEAVIEST, MOST IMPRESSIVE SLABS OF MOLTEN MELODIC SHREDDING METAL TO DATE. THE ALBUM WAS RELEASED IN LATE FEBRUARY IN JAPAN, WILL HIT THE SHELVES IN LATE APRIL IN EUROPE, AND A US RELEASE IS STILL IN THE WORKS. VISIT [IMPELLITTERIFANCLUB.INFO](http://IMPELLITTERIFANCLUB.INFO) TO KEEP UP WITH THE LATEST, AS WELL AS VIEW THE NEW VIDEO.**

**JM: So Chris, tell us about the new CD *Wicked Maiden*.**

CI: The album has been released in Japan, and will be released in Europe on April 24th. This album is much heavier than any of our previous releases. We're getting pretty strong reviews so far. Many reviews are finding it hard to believe it is really us (laughter), but from what I am hearing so far, it has been positive.

**You all have always been pretty popular and famous in Japan, correct?**

Well, we've sold over a million records, but I do not consider us to be "famous" by any means. We have a niche I guess, and we have certain people that gravitate and support us, and they buy our records each time, and we've done fairly well, consistently selling a lot of records.





**You've been recording music since the 80's. What are your thoughts on the music scene in America these days?**

Well, the "scene" is controlled by corporations; there is no doubt about that. If you want to be a credible band, you have to be on a major label or you're not really known. If you want to make something of yourself, you have to make a name for yourself in America. Otherwise it seems like you do not really get any credibility with agency's that help you play and tour. Having said that, I think things are pretty bad. There are too many "gate keepers" that push back and keep down too much great talent and keep too many great bands out. Instead, we just get the flavor of the moment, and they control the shelf space and get the most attention.

**Do you feel the internet and online download services have been helping give smaller bands more exposure?**

The internet has greatly helped with exposure, and

getting the content out to the fans. If shows like the *Headbanger's Ball* won't play something, you can find it on the band's site most of the time. So yes, the internet is helping to change everything.

**When it comes to online buying, and downloads, I know some people who buy pretty much everything online through iTunes and the like. I personally am old school, and still want to have that piece of plastic in my hands, with the booklet, the lyrics, etc. What do you think of this new trend?**

Well of course, and CDs will be dead soon. The reality is though, that CDs sound better. When you buy online it is an mp3, so the audio quality is greatly reduced. I literally have our legal team pull off tracks from many of these YouTube type players because the sound quality is so bad. I do not want people's first impression of us to be through an mp3 or reduced quality YouTube player. A WAV files is much better and sounds big; but we don't spend a quarter of a million dollars on an album to have it out there sounding like junk. Especially something like our new release, which is sonically one of our best so far. We've consistently been told on interviews so far, how they can't believe just how big this new record sounds. It is truly one of the best albums we've ever done. This album is more of our driving heavy stuff – no ballads or anything. There are a few songs that do lean to the 80's

style, like the song "Garden of Eden." I really like the guitar solos on this album too, especially on songs like "Garden of Eden." Being called a shredder, that song is a great representation of a shred solo. This whole album, our focus was to make the whole song good, the singing, the song writing, the solos, all of it, rather than just trying to focus on one aspect.

**So, how did the reunion with Rob Rock take place?**

We've always been in contact and I have hinted about how I hated it without him. To me he was always the voice for this band. The chemistry I have with him ... I just feel very comfortable around him. He is a very calm person; I like working with him. I have worked with some fantastic people in the past, but the chemistry is not as strong as what I have with Rob. He consistently sounds like he does on the record, and every time he gets on stage, he never sucks. *Pedal to the Metal* was pretty much a disaster. It was really about a parody of sorts that no one really got, so it failed at what it was supposed to be. So I knew this next album had better be really special or I was "done for" (laughter).

**Well, speaking of Rob, that leads me to a question of interest to our fan base. Rob is well known to write lyrics that are spiritual in nature, which has caused your releases to be often lumped into the "Christian metal" genre. What are your feelings on that? Is that a conscience avenue for you, or do you just give Rob free reign in the lyric area?**

Rob has total free reign, but no, we are not a Christian rock band. Never have been, never will be. I have heard it a million times, and I just laugh. We're not a Christian band, and I am not trying to be derogatory. I personally do not want Christians to be persecuted when we as a band ... do those things ... cross the line that's offensive. I do not want to be the poster boy or role model for that. However, having said that – to be as clear as I can about this – I am a Christian. I believe in

Christ and I advocate that. If anyone wants to know about that, great, I will tell you about it; I am totally into that. And Rob, obviously, is really into that. Other members are Jewish or no religion practice. So, to label the band as that is completely unfair to those guys.

**Yes, I kind of wanted to clear that up, since I had heard at some point that you shared a similar faith base as Rob, but had not heard much about the other band members. I don't think I have necessarily heard you labeled as a Christian band, but mainly due to Rob's lyrics, a Christian friendly band.**

We have absolutely been labeled that, and it is fine if they want to throw us into that category. What I don't want is for them to be condemned for it when we make mistakes. I got an interesting letter about the use of the "F" word on the last album from a dad who was completely offended and said he wouldn't let his kids listen to our stuff anymore. I sat down and wrote him a letter of explanation and he wrote back saying he would totally continue listening to our stuff. We often convey lyrically ... it is not all Christianity ... even this new record is probably 90% not about Christianity but about other stuff. We try to convey a story, and to relate to the world and the way it speaks ... to be relative ... but not meaning we're condoning it ... we're just trying to make it relative and tell a story as accurate as possible.

**"I am a Christian. I believe in Christ and I advocate that."**

On the other side, I also get angry at all of the bands that condemn the Christian scene. After all, in the end, good always wins. I was doing another interview and they were saying how that stuff is all a gimmick, but they have to be careful, because that "gimmick" is influential on a 13 year-old kid. So, there is a responsibility for what is being said, because the lyrics do rub off and the way you behave does influence. So, when we are called names for our "Christian" lyrics, I always say, 'Look, you guys have your Slayer, and death and blood, and 666 lyrics, but I am laughing, saying go read the Bible, you'll find some seriously really cool content in there that is a lot stronger than writing about the same boring stuff that death metal bands keep writing about.'

These bands churn out the same stuff year after year and there is nowhere left to go, and it is all crap, because God wins in the end. Write more "God" lyrics and you'll have much cooler stories. The Old Testament has some really cool stuff. In the end, I don't try to worry about it. If you ask me straight up whose side am I on ... Christ's side, no doubt. I'll bend down in a second for Him. But as a band, don't put that title on us, because then when we make that human error and curse or whatever, then all of a sudden it makes Christians look bad and I do not want to do that ever.

The new album is in no way a Christian lyrics album, but they are not offensive. They tell a cool story like a good clean blockbuster movie.

**Yes, Rob told me that while not all of the lyrics he writes would fall into the blatant Christian category, that in everything he writes he seeks to be Christian friendly. I think that is great; to know that certain artists can be trusted, that while it may not be blatant Christian themes, it will be clean and not offensive to a Christian.**

**HEAVENS**



# THRESHER

## A Letter From The Grave

BY CHRIS GATTO

**THRESHER WAS A TALENTED CHRISTIAN THRASH BAND THAT PLAYED SHOWS AROUND THEIR NATIVE PA FROM 1988-1992. (YOUR FAITHFUL SCRIBE SAW THEM OPEN FOR HAVEN BACK IN HIS HIGH SCHOOL YEARS.) THOUGH THEY REMAINED UNSIGNED, THEIR CASSETTE ONLY DEMO CALLED TOTALLY POSSESSED REMAINS HIGHLY SOUGHT AFTER EVEN TODAY. BUT THERE'S MORE TO THIS THAN JUST A "WHERE ARE THEY NOW?" STORY. UNBEKNOWN TO MOST FANS, THRESHER RECORDED A FULL-LENGTH ALBUM THAT NEVER LEFT THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR. LIKE BURIED TREASURE, THIS GEM IS CALLED HERE I AM AND HAS BEEN UNEARTHED FOR THE FIRST TIME BY ROXX RECORDS (AVAILABLE AT ROXXPRODUCTIONS.COM). NOW MAYBE IT'S JUST THE THRASH REVIVAL GOING ON IN METAL NOW, BUT THE ALBUM SOUNDS REALLY AMAZING AND RELEVANT, EVEN AFTER ALMOST 20 YEARS. WITH HERE I AM'S RELEASE, WE THOUGHT IT HIGH TIME TO HUNT DOWN FORMER THRESHER SINGER JOHN MARK BUCHANAN AND COAX HIM INTO RELIVING HIS METAL PAST.**

**CG: Could you tell us a little about Thresher's time in the Christian metal scene.**

MB: Thresher came out of desire for ministry. I don't think anyone involved with Thresher was a die-hard metalhead, but we had a desire to reach that culture with the Gospel. The beginning came out of working on a demo for some songs I had been writing and wanted to record. I had no budget for this, so I turned to a good friend, Dave Kurtz, who had a small recording studio in his basement in Downingtown, Pa. Dave's studio wasn't much, but Dave was over the top, truly gifted with engineering and anything to do with recording. In the process of this, God began to stir something up in us with this music, and seeing the response from youth that were coming around and hanging out, we felt the call, and we said, "Here I am Lord, send me." So we progressively did more shows and wrote more songs and this all lasted about 4 years. As any married musician can tell you, this can put a strain on family and we were wrestling with that quite a bit. We thought

we were going to save the world (at least the speed metal world), but instead we were losing the foundation of our families/relationships that eventually brought things to an abrupt stop. I am happy to say that we are all doing well now and talking with each other and keeping the focus on Jesus.

**What are some of your memories of shows and the bands you played with?**

Wow, that's stretching the old brain. We had a great time playing and hanging out with R.E.X. label bands, Believer and Sacrament. Sardonyx was another group of guys we learned to love and played with. Kevin Fern, guitar player for Sardonyx, was a great guy and Kevin, we hope wherever you are that you're hanging in there. One gig sticks out for me... We had an invitation early on to open for Holy Soldier, which we did. Had the biggest crowd we had played for, so we were pretty pumped up. So we did our set, 4-5 songs maybe, and thought we were done. Well,

"The production is alright, but keep in mind this is a home grown project – we didn't have a huge budget for it. So, I think it is amazing for what it is, a tool for the Gospel."

for some reason Holy Soldier wasn't coming out and the MC asked us to continue. Well that was all the songs we had, so we just played a few over again. The audience didn't seem to mind, though, they were going nuts. Those were the days.

#### **What are the band members doing now?**

Dave Kurtz (bass and keys) is in music full time – recording, live sound, playing, and leading worship; he even gives lessons to young people and is very active with youth. He is happily married to Rachael and has 4 children. His only son, Jesse, is an up and coming player and a huge Thresher fan.

Rod Braun (guitar) – Just reconnected with Rod after a few years. He has just gotten married and works as a supervising mechanic in the Reading, PA. area. He still plays some, but is more into playing hockey and wrestling. Rod has a son, Tyler, who is also a big Thresher fan.

Jeff Newman (1st drummer) – Jeff and his wife, Jill, live in Lancaster, PA with their 3 children. His oldest is off to college this year – amazing – I remember holding Michael when he was in diapers. Jeff still looks great for an old guy. He works as a mechanical engineer on drawbridges and is very involved with their local church. I think he still plays a little at home – one of the best drummers I have ever played with.

Greg Yarborough (2nd drummer) – I lost touch with Greg and his wife Diane soon after I left the band back in 1992. I have tried to search him out, but not found him. I know he started making bow-hunting videos and became very successful with that, but don't know much more. If you're out there, man, look me up!!

Steve Bowen (almost 3rd drummer) – Steve was a friend of Rod's and after Greg left the band we were searching for a drummer. Steve was in NC and came up to meet us and try out. We decided to roll with him, but 2 months later the band split up, so we never actually got to play with him. I probably talk to Steve more now than any of the other band members. He is working in the electrician trade around Raleigh, is married to Anita and has 3 beautiful kids. He is playing in a jazz/fusion band called Baltic Avenue.

John Mark Buchanan (vocals and guitar) is living in south/central Pa. and is married to Sophie and has 3 great kids. Been working construction and doing music as well. Leading worship in our local church and started Hand to the Plow, a worship/jam band. Just started making acoustic guitars and am enjoying that a lot. Hope to make it into a full time thing called Kingdom Guitars.

#### **What are you listening to these days?**

Not too much with music, mostly trying to listen to God.

#### **What on earth caused the band to not release such a powerful album and why is now the time to release it?**

The CD release is something Dave and I have talked about for some time, but it has been a drawn out process to complete. In 1992, we had just finished recording these 8 songs and were talking pretty seriously with R.E.X. Records to sign up with them. When things fell apart, we all kept our distance for a while and eventually the band dissolved completely. There was just no one in the driver's seat anymore to take the initiative and put this together. I always

handled most of the management stuff for the band and was burned out with it, and so it stayed on the shelf. It is a lot of work to put a project like this together and I want to thank Bill Bafford of Rxxx Records for all his help and initiative with it. I think the strong point of the CD is the rawness of the music and the lyrical content. The production is alright, but keep in mind this is a home grown project – we didn't have a huge budget for it. So, I think it is amazing for what it is, a tool for the Gospel.

#### **What has been fans' reaction so far to the new songs on MySpace?**

I have been amazed by the fans out there that still want this stuff and loved Thresher. It was kind of a bubble we were in at the time, mostly just a regional thing, but our following seems to be worldwide now. We've been hearing from most of them through [myspace.com/godsthresher](http://myspace.com/godsthresher).

#### **Can we expect to see more from Thresher, or will this album be a "letter from beyond the grave?"**

Definitely no plans to revive Thresher. This is it for Thresher, the final countdown.

**Thank you, Mark, for talking with us. For any of you out there hoping for a Thresher reunion, I think Mark just dashed your dreams, but for new fans and old, *Here I Am* will serve quite nicely as the band's posthumous swan song.**

**HEAVENS**  
RECORDS





# BOARDERS

## So Far, So Good ... So What (Next?)

BY JONATHAN SWANK

**POWERED BY MEGA DOSES OF 80'S METAL – INFLUENCES TO INCLUDE (AMONG OTHERS) AC/DC, ACCEPT, METALLICA AND PARTICULARLY MEGADETH – MILAN, ITALY'S MYSTERIOUSLY NAMED BOARDERS RECENTLY SAW THE RELEASE OF THEIR EXTREMELY DIVERSE WORLDWIDE AND RETROACTIVE RECORDS LABEL DEBUT, *THE WORLD HATES ME*. ORIGINALLY FORMED IN 1989, THE BAND MIXES MANY GENRES OF ROCK AND METAL, BUT AS EGI (LEAD VOCALS/ RHYTHM GUITARS) SAYS, "OUR MUSIC ... IT PAYS A VERY BIG TRIBUTE TO 80'S METAL, TO HARD ROCK AND TO AMERICAN THRASH." THEY HAVE PREVIOUSLY RELEASED TWO THRASH METAL DEMOS IN THE EARLY 90'S, AS WELL AS A COVER CD WITH SONGS FROM TESTAMENT, HELLOWEEN, JUDAS PRIEST, MEGADETH AND AC/DC. THEY'VE PLAYED AT BOTH ROCK ON THE ROCK AND ELEMENTS OF ROCK FESTIVALS IN EUROPE.**

Egi had this to say about the new release and how it came about after all these years. "When we recorded the album we didn't mean to propose it to any label, but we did it just for fun and – personally speaking – to put the recent changes in my life (in terms of faith) into a concrete form. Everything then happened thanks to Denny Hurst and his family: Denny put us on the bill of his Rock on the Rock festival, and a guy from Elements of Rock festival saw our concert and decided to publish our record. In late 2008, Matt Hunt – from the mighty Retroactive Records – published and promoted the CD worldwide. We thank the Lord for any doors He opened so far!"

*The World Hates Me* really is a great mix of everything that made metal so enjoyable "back in the day." With so many great songs to pick from, I asked Egi to choose a favorite. "My personal favorite song is the opener 'True Rebellion', both for the message and for the music; it's a hard rock song strongly influenced by typical AC/DC and d:a:d groove. The lyrics are inspired by Ezekiel 37, the prophecy about God breathing upon dead people and making them come alive. 'True Rebellion' is about refusing to conform to this world and – specifically from the metal scene perspective – it talks about rebellion against the fashion of hate and evil at any cost."

Given that these guys used to have a Megadeth tribute band, it's not surprising to find 'deth's "In My Darkest Hour" on the new CD. "We decided to play that song, because of the quality of the music, for the meaning (it was dedicated to Cliff from Metallica,

right after he died in that accident); and for the fact that we originally changed the lyrics in a 'Christianized' version, which was titled 'In My Brightest Hour'. Out of respect to Megadeth, the former label (Quamlibet / Weathertop) decided to publish the version with original lyrics." It's also not surprising then to discover that Dave Mustaine has had a big impact on Egi. "I find Megadeth's music, especially the *Peace Sells...* album, so genial, and so different from the thrash that was around at that time. I could say that the Young brothers and Dave Mustaine are the main reasons why I started playing guitar."

Apparently Egi's interests in Mustaine run deeper than the musical level. "I shared Dave Mustaine's point of view about many things. For instance, in the song 'Peace Sells', the verse, 'What do you mean I don't believe in God? I talk to Him everyday' is a typical sarcastic way to put very smart concepts in the lyrics. He's talking about all the people that profess to be atheist, but, on the other hand, curse Him whenever something is going wrong. I've always thought that Dave's lyrics were so outstanding. The fact that he was able to write lyrics so deep was in a certain way in contrast with his reputation of violence, drug abuse and alcohol addiction. He was the one who was fired by Metallica, because he was too much out of control for them....and we're not talking about Fleetwood Mac, you understand! That's why I always argued about his will to search for the truth, as many of us were. Later, when it happened, I was, of course, happy to learn about his conversion."

"I understand the need to keep the message very simple and adherent to the Word, as the Word itself came for everyone without distinction in terms of culture and cleverness. The other thing I understand ... is the need to be the most honest you can about how the particular message of the Word of God you're trying to spread has really become in your life. A leader isn't a person who has any responsibility or power over others, but his duty is to live concretely the Word of God – before the people that he leads – in order to be able to guide them in something that he has heard, believed, decided to live and test in his own life."



Egi and his bandmates have an obvious love for 80's/early 90's metal, but most would be shocked to find that Egi doesn't look to metal or hard rock for inspiration. "I prefer classic rock and pop styles, many of them from the 80's (Supertramp, Toto, Chicago, Men at Work, etc.). I also have a passion for Burt Bacharach music and for classical music." How's that for diversity? Additionally, Egi had no qualms about sharing his opinions on the modern metal scene. "I'm stuck in the 80's, so the only metal that I can stand for more than 15 minutes is the old school metal. I'm not against modern metal; I simply don't like it. But what I dislike most is an old band trying to get modern doing something they're not able to. I find that to change style on every album is not necessarily a value or a sign of maturity. Regarding the message, I really dislike the whole black metal and death metal stereotypes and in general, all the anti-Christian movement, which here in Europe, is a very big thing. I dislike it, but I'm not discouraged at all, since 'where sin abounds, grace abounds even more.'" In fact, there are quite a few things he finds encouraging in today's metal milieu. When I asked him what encourages him the most, he replied: "The fact that metal didn't die twenty years ago, but is still alive and kicking; the fact that many bands from the past are coming back together again; the fact that metal is resistant to any fashion that seems to be overtaking it (grunge, new, etc) and the fact that – even if it became a big thing in terms of market – metal kids continue to be independent and refuse to be dominated by the market's logic ... and it's good ground to spread the Word."

And speaking of the Word... Egi (along with his girlfriend at the time/now wife) was saved in 2003, an event that "...was a shocking experience that changed our life in a profound way." They are now proud parents of two children (the second on the

way in July). But when you are a secular band playing cover tunes of 80's metal bands... something's got to change. "It's still too early in my life where I've been a real follower of Jesus to say what I need to adjust, mainly because I'm still in the process of understanding what is happening. I could say that one of the main – and very simple – things I understand is the need to keep the message very simple and adherent to the Word, as the Word itself came for everyone without distinction in terms of culture and cleverness. The other thing I understand in confronting the outside world about faith is the need to be the most honest you can about how the particular message of the Word of God you're trying to spread has really become in your life. A leader isn't a person who has any responsibility or power over others, but his duty is to live concretely the Word of God – before the people that he leads – in order to be able to guide them in something that he has heard, believed, decided to live and test in his own life."

Amen to that. In closing, I asked if there were any plans for Boarders to tour this new album. "No plans at the moment. We're finishing the writing for the new album and we'd like to record it in late 2009, so we will probably be able to tour behind both next year. Thanks for your interest in our band! I'd like to take the opportunity to thank all the people who have contacted us through our websites and Matt Hunt of Retroactive for the great job he did and the enthusiasm he gave back to us! All the blessings."

HEAVENS



# GUARDIAN

## Back In The House

BY DAVID BACH

**WHEN I WAS ASKED TO WRITE A "WHERE-ARE-THEY-NOW?" PIECE ON GUARDIAN, I WAS TEMPTED TO WRITE SOMETHING GOOFY LIKE I DID BACK IN THE DAYS OF YORE...THE EARLY 90'S...WHEN I WAS A COLUMNIST FOR HM. HOWEVER, IT DAWNED ON ME THAT MY FRESH ATTEMPTS AT DINOSAUR ROCK HUMOR ARE PERHAPS BEST LEFT UNPUBLISHED. INSTEAD, I DUG INTO MY EMAIL BOX AND PULLED OUT SOME OF THE QUESTIONS THAT PEOPLE HAVE ASKED ABOUT GUARDIAN OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS. WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, HERE WE GO...**

**Guardian has announced several reunions over the last few years but they all seemed to fizzle out. Is there really a new project on the way?**

We resemble that remark! We have indeed tried to get things off the ground a few times over the past few years, but it has never worked out for one crazy reason or another. It became a tragic comedy with us. We had deals in place and things would come up or go South, etc. We almost felt jinxed. But in reality, our biggest enemy was always time. I think that is probably true for all the bands of our era, who have started some reunion action, but have been unable to get things off the ground. In reality, most bands our age have wives, kids, mortgages, full-time jobs etc. I guarantee you that all of these bands really want to get together and play, but it's hard to find the quality time to do it correctly. Let's face it, the spirit is willing but the calendar is weak! We finally have some video and audio takes in the can, so I can finally say with some certainty that there is definitely going to be some real Guardian activity in 2009! Go to [houseofguardian.com](http://houseofguardian.com) for a sneak peek.

**What is "House of Guardian" and where did the idea come from?**

House of Guardian is a live performance webcast. We'd like to say it's reality TV, but in reality ... we are just setting up live in a living room and inviting the world to come watch us jam some Guardian tunes via the Internet. We are planning to release

episodes in both English and Spanish. We will also release the live audio tracks via iTunes, etc. We are writing some new songs as well and we will unveil them on the show as we go. We affectionately refer to the show as H.O.G. (say "Hawg").

The idea for H.O.G. was actually born on December 6th, 2008. We played a show at the Plaza De Mayo in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The U.S. equivalent would be like playing a show at the Lincoln Memorial in D.C. We came out on stage and there were 80,000 people out there in the crowd! We knew we still had a loyal Latin following because of our three Spanish records, but we were blown away to hear a crowd that size singing along with our songs. On the plane ride home, Jamie Rowe leaned over to me and said, "Dude, we're idiots if we don't get it together. I know we can't tour as much anymore, but these people still seem to want to hear us play." I agreed. It was pretty obvious that we needed to finally make something happen.

**I read somewhere that Tony Palacios said he would not tour again. Is he still in the band?**

Well, it's true that Tony is no longer a fan of extensive tour travel, but he is still ... and will always be a core member of Guardian. Every time we have tried to get some new recordings together previously, Tony has always been ready to participate, but he made



it clear that he had no interest in touring. The only time we ever had a rub is when I would push him to play live ... and he would push back. It's what brothers do. I would call him up and say, "Hey Tony, we got an offer to play some dates in Europe..." He would get mad at me and say, "Dave, what part of "NO" do you not understand?" Fortunately, we have been friends so long that we would still go out to lunch and hang out ... as long as I did not bring up the "T" word. (Tour!). Tony has a great thing going with his mixing and production work and his schedule is booked most of the time. He also has six kids and that is a full-time gig in itself. I always ask him about live shows anyway, not only to get a rise out of him, but because I would want the guys in the band to at least ask me if the situation was reversed. To be fair, Tony was never the reason we could not get it together on all of our previous false starts. I actually think he would play some dates if it made sense with his schedule. (Uh oh, he's gonna read this and my phone will be ringing ... Sorry, Tony!)

#### Why did you add another guitarist?

Enter Jamey Perrenot. Last year, Karl Ney saw Jamey playing in a worship band at the church they both attend. They were playing worship songs but Jamey was playing a Les Paul through a Marshall! Karl said, "I gotta get this guy's number." It was a good thing he did, because we had just been offered a big show in Argentina. I did my usual shtick and called Tony up. Ironically, Tony actually wanted to play this show... probably because our Latin shows are always very special and he had just produced a band down there. But, he was already booked producing another record. So, Karl called up Jamey and he was in for the gig. Jamey has played with LeAnn Rimes and Taylor Swift, but he is definitely a rock guy. We hit it off with Jamey right away and after the amazing show in Buenos Aires, he was like... "Dudes! We should do more of that. I've got a studio in my house and we should set up in my living room and roll tape." A few more ideas were thrown around and the "House of Guardian" concept took final shape. When I called Tony up and told him the idea, he was like, "You mean we can record and play live without touring? I'm in!" We weren't sure how Tony would feel about adding another guitar player, but he said, "This is great! We can do some cool things with two guitarists." So, now we are five-piece. It will be cool because, if Tony can make a show ... great! If not, we have our act together as a fourpiece.

#### What are the members of Guardian doing these days as far as real jobs?

Real jobs? Yes, our parents should finally be happy! Actually, we are all still working in the music business in some twisted way or another. As I mentioned, Tony mixes and produces records full time. He works in all genres, but mostly rock, pop and country. When we shot the pilot episode of H.O.G., he was in the studio mixing a new country artist signed to Capitol. I just showed up one night with a camera crew and filmed him while he was working. He puts up with a lot from me. When you read one of these days that he has finally popped me in the mouth, I probably deserved it! But I digress... Karl Ney has a business management company where he handles biz for Newsboys, producer Tedd T, and several other music-biz clients. Jamie Rowe has his own Internet marketing company with clients such as Integrity Music and others. Jamey Perrenot plays live dates backing up various artists and also produces many independent artists at his home studio. As for me, I worked in the record industry for many years, but my latest venture has been a music-based virtual world for kids called Franktown Rocks ([franktownrocks.com](http://franktownrocks.com)). Start-ups are fun, but they are always a hair-raising financial ride! We have been squeezing in H.O.G. when we can around all of our schedules, but I'm happy to report that we will really be squeezing out our first video episode this spring.

#### Guardian released quite a few projects over the years...what is your favorite album?

It's hard to pick just one album, because we've been together for quite a long time. There are actually quite a few different eras in the band over 27 years! Definitely more than a few different hairstyles! For me personally, I think the mid-90's albums are my favorites. Those would be *Miracle Mile*, *Swing Swang Swung*, and *Buzz*. I like *Miracle Mile*, because we always wanted to do a concept record and I think we pulled that off decently. I love *Swing Swang Swung*, because it was such an acoustic left turn after *Miracle Mile*. People thought we were committing career suicide, but those songs still sound pretty good to me, even to this day. *Buzz* is definitely a favorite, because we had been touring together for many years at that point and really knew how to instinctively play off one another. There's a



certain amount of angst in that record that still makes it enjoyable for me to listen to.

#### You were a record executive in Nashville for quite a few years ... which is funny, because you used to write a column in HM joking about the evils of the record industry. What is your take on the current state of the business?

What can I say? I'm a hypocrite ... and the pay was pretty decent, too! I never would have dreamed I'd work for the Christian label divisions of some of the big companies (EMI, BMG). I especially loved my 5 years at EMI, mostly because of the staff and some of the artists. I enjoy the entire creative process ... from the origin of a song ... to putting the final graphic touches on the cover. I feel fortunate to have had that label experience, as it allowed me to see things beyond just the artist perspective. Probably my biggest personal frustration was that most of the Nashville-based labels were never really into the true essence of rock bands. Oh, there were rock acts on the roster ... but a lot of time was spent at the labels trying to make the bands "kinder and gentler" for Christian radio ... and to smooth out their rough edges for the sensitivities of the evangelical church audience. That was very frustrating, but I did get to work on some great records with some great people. Nashville is just not a rock & roll town. Brandon Ebel (Tooth & Nail etc.) has done a great job of letting bands be themselves ... and it should be noted that he never set up shop in Nashville. I live in Nashville and I love it as a city. It's a great place to raise your kids ... but a rock & roll town ... it ain't.

As far as the current state of the business...the music business is booming! Great new music is being birthed every day, but the record business of old is breathing its dying gasp. The Christian labels still say biz is great, but Christian music has always lagged about 2 years behind the mainstream ... so their day is coming. I take no joy in the downfall of the old label system. It just doesn't work anymore. Time to move forward. This is the greatest time ever to be an independent artist. The world is your oyster. You can do it all yourself. The downside is that you no longer have the steroid cash injection of an old-school record deal. The upside is that you are truly the captain of your own destiny and don't have to worry about corporate attempts to mold you into something that you're not. My advice: Just make music that you and your core fans like. It really is that simple. Young bands will have to work even harder, because it's all on their shoulders ... but the success will be 100% theirs as well. That's exactly what we are doing with Guardian. We are doing this all ourselves with no illusions of record deals or any of that. If we pick up distribution ... great! If not, that's cool too. The one advantage of getting older is perspective. We are just enjoying playing again and we are happy to do it ourselves ... so we can be ourselves. If this new project succeeds or fails ... it's all on us ... just as it should be.

For the latest updates on Guardian, check out  
[bouseofguardian.com](http://bouseofguardian.com) • [lacasadeguardian.com](http://lacasadeguardian.com) • [twitter.com/bouseofguardian](https://twitter.com/bouseofguardian)



# ALBUM REVIEWS



## BELIEVER

GABRIEL

By now, I assume all die-hard fans already own this new release. If you were not aware of its existence though ...

where have you been? As a fan from the early demo days, I was particularly thrilled to find the band did not go in a more extreme direction in an attempt to fall in line with the typical overly brutal sound these days. Vocally, they maintain a sound reminiscent to the style of the original three releases, yet the lyrics actually seem a bit easier to decipher this time around (better production could be an attribute). The band was always known for their ever-so-cool experimentation with musical styles and there is a bit of that still present here, especially in the last few tracks. Lots of cool time changes and complex break downs help to keep this album from becoming just a mundane drone of speed and screaming as some bands of this style can fall into. Lyrically I found it to be a bit complex, and often failed to grasp the message, which would be my only real complaint. There are elements on this release that have an industrial feel, but overall it is an intense, well-produced metal release that clearly shows that these guys still have the chops to give us an amazing musical journey. Sure to please old fans, and make many new fans along the way. Hopefully this won't be the last we hear from the band. [Metal Blade] Jeff McCormack



## GRAVE FORSAKEN

THIS DAY FORTH

Grave Forsaken's third album continues the retro-thrash stylings the band is known for, leaving off any death metal

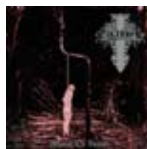
influence and reminding one of a day when thrash was born from the marriage of the heaviness of metal and the pace of punk rock. In fact, vocalist Tim Steadman reminds me of a mix of Living Sacrifice-era DJ and early Crashdog spitter Spike Nard. The raw production values suit the music, although there are a few weak moments that seem to have gotten passed over in the mixing/editing process. Lyrically, the band is in fine form. It's refreshing to hear a band leave the abstract poetry behind in favor of blatant, in-your-face evangelistic rants. The band's clearest influence is still Mortification, but fans of the Living Sacrifice debut or Vengeance Rising will also appreciate this. [Soundmass] Loyd Harp



## IMPELLITTERI

WICKED MAIDEN

There is no band out there right now that is playing this kind of heavy melodic metal better than Impellitteri. Yes, Scorpions (along with perhaps Dokken in the 80's) once wore that crown, but there is no denying that they aren't as heavy or as fast as they used to be. Circle II Circle comes close, but they don't have a shredder like Chris Impellitteri – who, by the way, sounds faster and more creative than ever. Regardless, *Wicked Maiden* – which heralds the return of Rob Rock to the band – picks right up where Chris, Rob and company left off with 2000's *Crunch*. This time, however, all the ballads (the gloriously melodic "Eyes Of An Angel" about as close as it gets) and instrumental songs have been left off in favor of 10 well-crafted and heavy songs filled with great riffs, speedy solos, thundering fast double bass drumming and those amazingly catchy choruses. The key this time around is great songwriting. They have incorporated elements from their best albums: the melodic hooks of *Answer To The Master* and the speed, heaviness and progressiveness of *Screaming Symphony*. The wonderfully crafted "Wonderful Life" is probably the best example of this hybrid of old and new sounds – simply amazing! While vintage Impellitteri, most of the songs feel fresh. They even show off a bit of humor in the bluesy, retro 80's "Hi Scool Revolution." Brilliant! [Metal Heaven] Jonathan Swank



## ELGIBBOR

REPENT OR PERISH

I've been following EG for a few years, intrigued by both their obscurity and their prolific output of harsh black metal. With roughly 9 albums in tow, released in about 5 years, I was excited to hear their latest. On *Repent*, we see Fire (EG's sole member) experimenting with some ambient textures, gothic overtones, and even clean singing. While on some tracks it works to create an atmospheric black metal sound, overall Elgibbor is at its best when it's fast, raw and harsh ... and there are plenty of tracks here that have that melt-yourface speed. Though I'm not suggesting the band refrain from trying new sounds, I do hope they take their time finding sounds that contribute to the best that Elgibbor has to offer rather than detracting from it. [Open Grave] Loyd Harp



## THRESHER

HERE I AM

Recorded almost 20 years ago as a follow-up to the excellent *Totally Possessed* demo, *Here I Am* was never released to the public ... until now. Fans of Valor, the British thrash band Onslaught and pre-*Black* album Metallica will really enjoy this. The album's production is clearly from the '80s, as are the lyrics, when bands were more Christ-centered and bolder with their words. There is a sameness about each song that is both comforting and repetitious, yet this is some great old school thrash metal. [Roxx] Chris Beck

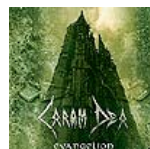


## TOURNIQUET

CRAWL TO CHINA (REISSUE)

The album *Crawl to China* is by far the most bizarre and eclectic collection of styles in Tourniquet's legendary back catalog.

Detractors dogged the album as veering too far from the metal "formula" (and rumors persist that there was record label pressure to do so), yet it brilliantly showcases the band's songwriting prowess, and yielded such gems as "Enveloped in Python," "White Knucklin' the Rosary," "Tire Kicking," and "The Tell-Tale Heart." The reissue has new artwork, extended liner notes, but only an instrumental version of the ballad "If I Was There" for bonus material. Reissues are available from the band at [tourniquet.net](http://tourniquet.net) and early studies suggest that purchasing some may temporarily relieve up to six years worth of separation anxiety and listlessness caused by a vitamin T deficiency in one's diet. Paging Dr. Kirkpatrick! [Pathogenic] Chris Gatto



## CORAM DEO

EVANGELION

Although this is an independent release, everything about this project is quality – from the full-color art and booklet to the blackened gothic metal on the disc. Stylistically, this Ukrainian band explores every tributary of that family of metal genres, trying their hand at keyboard-driven gothic metal as well as atmospheric black metal thrash attacks. They cover a lot of ground, but still manage to keep the project cohesive. This appears to be a limited run of 250, so act fast to obtain a copy – and let's hope a label shows interest for future material. [Independent] Loyd Harp





### WITH FAITH OR FLAMES

#### A CONQUEST TRIUMPHANT

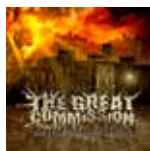
WTOF's sophomore full-length starts throwing punches just as the bell sounds and doesn't let up 'till round ten. The production is top-notch and musicianship is superb. Stylistically, it's a mix of pretty much every form of modern metal out there – thrash, death, some sparingly used metalcore breakdowns and even some traditional heavy metal melodies are used. While this mish-mash will appeal to many listeners' tastes, the downside is that the songs tend to be indistinguishable from one another, and I'm afraid this incredibly talented band could get lost in today's hodgepodge metal climate. But nonetheless, when the music is as good as it is, *Conquest* shouldn't be hurting for listeners. [Stand And Deliver] Loyd Harp



### ARNION

#### FALL LIKE RAIN (REISSUE)

Previously released on Silent Music (as an export only), this very talented Brazilian, neo-thrash band's debut has been digitally remastered and released on Retroactive Records and now includes the band's 2006 7-track *Refuge* demo. These guys do a great job of blending both old and new school thrash – paying equal tribute to their fellow countrymen Sepultura, as well as Christian thrash pioneers Tourniquet and Deliverance. (See full review of the export in Heaven's Metal #79). The demo material included on this release falls into the "more music" category rather than the "reveals more about the band musically" category. [Retroactive] Jonathan Swank



### THE GREAT COMMISSION

#### AND EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW

This is the kind of hardcore that metalheads will love or hate. Those who love it do so because of the heavy riffing and lyrical intensity. The writing shares more in common with the bold evangelistic lyrics of Christian metal's early years, or the "Spirit-filled" days of hardcore. Those who hate it will do so because of the semi-monotonous rhythms and structures. While there aren't too many surprises on this record, there's something to be said for *Every Knee*, which recalls Redlands-neighbors Sleeping Giant, as well as the mid-90s Spirit-filled scene. [Strike First] Loyd Harp



### SEXUALLY FRUSTRATED

#### FEEL THE FRUSTRATION

Warning: Parental advisory – explicit content. No ... no cusswords here ... just lots of anti-masturbation, anti-fornication, anti-lust punk rawk ranting that would make Lust Control proud and your mother blush crimson red. While the locker room jargon is gonna be too much for some to stomach, these guys have a lot to say, although they don't take themselves too seriously. The interview outtakes at the end of the CD are absolutely ROTFLOL hilarious. And yes, I wrote this review in less than 2 minutes. [Independent] Jonathan Swank



### TY TABOR

#### BALANCE

As Ty Tabor's fifth solo release, *Balance* seems to have a little bit of everything that is ... well ... Ty Tabor. There is no mistaking his distinctive style or voice. This record is filled with 11 songs that cover the range of his musical styles and eras. While there is no new ground broken here, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" certainly applies. While we are not treated to an overabundant amount of soloing, the sound of the record is very guitar driven. Lyrically, Ty is as open emotionally as he has ever been. Sadly though, it appears that he may be in a crisis of faith (I suggest checking the lyrics for your own interpretation) and he certainly could use our prayers. The only complaint I have musically is that the drums on some of the tracks sound programmed and therefore detract from the otherwise well-performed disc. If you like the King's X sound and Ty's numerous works, there no reason not to add this to your collection. [Molken] Todd Walker



### VARIOUS ARTISTS

#### REVELATIONS VOL I:

#### A LIGHT IN A DARK PLACE

This 17-track black metal compilation puts to rest any notions that black metal is not a diversified subgenre of extreme metal. One track each is contributed by bands from over 10 nations and 4 continents. Standout cuts include those by Panama's eerily melodic Sorrowstorm, Holland's world-influenced Borgazur, Belgium's raw/harsh Brood Drift, America's sludgy-black Job and Australia's doomy Synnove. [Sullen] Loyd Harp



### ECTHIRION

#### APOCALYPTIC VISIONS

Bringing a new twist on our favorite genre, UK's Ecthirion brand themselves the new wave of epic orchestral metal. Not strictly a metal release, classical music is the dominant theme that weaves through this EP, with classical/operatic pieces bookending the 3 middle songs, which feature rock and metal guitars, yet never quite leaving the whole classical mindset – almost as if the guitars and drums were just another part of some grand orchestra. Interestingly, as well, is the fact that all the vocals (clean, death, black, opera, and narration) are provided, not by the band, but by guest vocalists, including Azahel from Frostlikeashes. The only comparison that springs to mind is the epic "movie soundtrack" style of metal made by Italy's Rhapsody of Fire. With its beautiful and lush artistry, Ecthirion brings a welcome respite from the rage driven metal that dominates our scene. [Soundmass] Chris Gatto



### UNSYLIG TUMULT

#### VOICES OF THE WINDS

Here is yet another Ukrainian black metal band/project (members also appearing in CoramDeo), somewhat ambient styled, with a wide array of influences, to include Antestor, Synnove, Borgazur and Holy Blood. And it is the variety here that makes this release so noteworthy, along with the clever use of keys to create a somber, reflective atmosphere. The vocals – harsh, yet not too shrill – are a plus, as well. The combination of all these elements, which gives this "unblack" metal a very "progressive" feel, is a winning one. [Bombworks] Jonathan Swank



### ZION'S RAIN

#### VOLUMES OF TRUTH

While the rock here is predominantly from the 70's era (think Y&T or a real slow Allman Bros.) and the vocals are crazily out-of-date, the production raw and hollow, but the guitar leads sing and the thematic songs are the kind of gripping heart-felt stories that we'd clutch and hold on to when Christian metal and rock were oh-so young. Simon Cowell would insult this act on TV, but he never had to depend on Tunesmith bands like Anthem back in the day, either. [Independent] Doug Van Pelt



# PASTOR BOB'S INTERNATIONAL REPORT

By Pastor Bob

Taught a "Skype Study" for one of the Sanctuary home groups in Denmark this evening. It amazes me just how much smaller the world becomes every year. Even 10 years ago, I never would have imagined teaching a live video study from my desk in Nashville to a room full of kids – and being able to see them and answer their questions. Of course, I recognize most of them. They also attend our Green Light District Festival there, and perhaps a few others around the world. As the world becomes smaller, the Christian Metal community grows as well. Year after year, I see great friendships forged from every corner of the planet. And they all have two things in common: a love for the music, and a love for God. I am excited for you to see what is going on in two more places internationally below. And don't forget to send them a note and encourage each of them in their ministries!

[pastorbob@sanctuaryinternational.com]



## England, Kenya & metal *Jo Smart & Mildred Achoch*



### Jo Smart Glorious Undead Church – Destruction Fest, London

The "Christian metal" scene doesn't exist in London. The label is inaccurate and misleading anyway, in my humble opinion (along with "Christian band") – come and talk to me about why at Destruction Fest (D-Fest). However, I'll use it here for sake of space. What

one sees in London is a thriving metal scene – one of the best around I gather – with bands from all over the world clamouring to play here. It's great. So the next question is – are there are any bands here that are singing about Jesus and the Kingdom of God in a positive way? And the answer is yes. Admittedly, not that many. (I'm beginning to think that London is a spiritual quag and it's a struggle to breathe most of the time, and I don't mean from gross pollution.) The interesting thing is that there are bands in each of the key metal genres that are fully reaching out with a gospel-based message. Each of those bands are either completely or mostly filled with folks with the Word as the ground on which they stand. So, we see a scene with a bunch of Christians moving inside of it. Loving people, befriending people, gently sharing their faith with people and crying out to God with one voice for the people (and of course, for the bands that play with the "Christian" bands). There are two cells of the Body in London with a specific ministerial calling to the metal / alternative scene: Asylum London and Glorious Undead Church (GU). These fellowships reach out in different parts of London. Asylum, broadly focused on Soho – with all its venues and dens of iniquity – run club nights that play only "Christian metal/alternative" and also reach out into the Gothic subcultures. GU is more focused on Camden with its many metal-friendly venues and a large part of their outreach is gig-based. Gigs always contain one "Christian" band (sometimes two) and the rest are secular. It's a great place for fellowship and "stealth evangelism" (you need to ask about that at D-Fest

too!). GU also organizes D-Fest. It had a three year hiatus, but after a lot of sad faces from our Viking brethren at the lack of a festival, and after a lot of prayer, 2009 sees a new incarnation of the event. It became very clear (through some serious prophetic input) that this event was to be ministerial in its main focus. The music is the fellowship thing. There is, I sense, a massive movement of God right now and D-Fest will be about helping us all get moving in that, too, in our own lives and in all areas of our individual and collective ministries. My friend had an awesome picture from God recently: Jesus, centre-stage, shredding some massive riff and headbanging whilst His Glory filled the room... See you at the front (located at the foot of the cross). [myspace.com/destructionfestival, myspace.com/gloriousundeadchurch]



### Mildred Achoch – Kenya

Bloodshed. Murfy's Flaw. Seismic. UETA. Narcissistic Tendencies with Delusions of Grandeur. There are only a handful of rock bands in Kenya and out of this handful, about a third of them are Christian rock bands. And these few Christian bands do not play metal exclusively. However,

this is not at all discouraging. In fact, the fact that there exists any rock bands in Kenya is a miracle in itself; because, ten years ago, there weren't any Kenyan rock bands to speak of. The Good Book tells me in Zechariah 4:10 that I shouldn't despise small beginnings. The Kenyan rock scene indeed has had small beginnings, and it faces many misconceptions ranging from "rock music is the white man's music" to the classic "rock music is the devil's music." But perceptions are slowly changing. Mavuno Church – the church I belong to – recently hosted American band Jars of Clay. I took this as a positive sign of things to come: today Jars of Clay, tomorrow P.O.D. or any other Christian hard rock/metal band! As a Kenyan

Christian rock fan and a Christian goth, it takes a lot of faith to participate in the rock/goth scene. I call those things that are not as though they were (Romans 4:17) and I have evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). So I attend the rock shows such as the monthly Battle of the Bands, organized by a Kenyan rock band called M2O. And I organize goth meetups where I hang out with the few Kenyan Goths that I know. My eyes of faith tell me that these Kenyan bands will be ambassadors for Christ. Kenyan hard rock/metal bands such as Last Year's Tragedy, Metallien and Jack the Hammer will spread the Good News. And the goth meetups with my goth friends (who are all diehard metalheads) will evolve into a Christian goth meetup, then a Bible study group, then a church! As far as I know, I haven't heard of any Kenyan goth bands. I have always wanted to form a band, so maybe I will be the one to start the first ever Christian goth band in Kenya! However, my immediate plan is to start a regular event called XPW – Xtreme Praise and Worship. I once heard a talk by a certain Christian preacher who said that worship and evangelism go together. My hope is that XPW will be a platform for Kenyan Christian rock bands and will also be a tool for spreading the Gospel to the Kenyan rock fans. My other project is ROFFEKE – the ROck 'n' ROll Film Festival, KEnya. There is no denying that films have a large impact on society. The mission of ROFFEKE is to dispel rock 'n' roll myths and misconceptions via the media of film. So I would like to use rockumentaries such as *Why Should the Devil have all the Good Music?* and *First Love* to do away with the misconception that rock is the devil's music and to show that Christian rock fans are just as passionate and committed to following Christ as any other Christian. So please pray for me, for the Kenyan rock and goth scene and for Kenyan Christians to reach out to the rock fans and the goths rather than to shun or condemn them. And to all Christian metal bands around the world: "Karibu Kenya!" Welcome to Kenya! [mavunochurch.org]

# THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET

By Steve Rowe

## CONTENTMENT

One problem we in the western world are facing right now is a growing inability to be content with who we are and what we have. Even in some churches there is a big push to get more, more, more. Over the past couple of years, God has challenged me to be content. I have close family members and friends who work two jobs, 60 hours a week, just to get more: a bigger house, better location, bigger TV, newer gaming system. It seems endless. What ever happened to the simple joy of family time and just living life with the basics that we need?

Sure, we must work hard and provide as best we can for our families, but how do we lose our focus on the most important things in life? God's will must come first and then our families. One day at the park with the family... Take a picnic, play some family football games and simply be content to be alive and around enough to enjoy our families and see all God's blessings.

Many of my friends and family have deluxe houses, huge plasma TVs and surround sound home theatre, but are too busy working to pay for them or to ever enjoy them or their kids. Plus, what they have seems to be never enough. My

13 year old son Leighton asked me recently, "Dad, why can't we get a big TV, surround sound system and a Wii game station?" I was sitting on our sofa with my arm around him watching sports on our big, but cheap TV through our 25 year old stereo. I asked Leighton a question in return: "What would be better ... all the other 'stuff' or me sitting here with my arm around you watching the Cricket (Aussie National sport)? If we had all that other 'stuff' I would have to worry about getting more money and Mum would never be home but out working two jobs." He replied, "Yeah, I would rather have you and Mum around. I love you Dad." That is contentment, and in my book success.

I encouraged Leighton to be content with what we do have and not focus on what we don't. I told him that God wants us to "be still and know that He is God." I shared with Leighton about the tremendous contentment I have found in my life. Find contentment and you set yourself free from stress and worry. This life is not supposed to be a McDonald's life. It is much more rewarding and relaxing being a "barbeque in the backyard" with the family life.



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